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Issue 3 | May 2007

HGZine

Free Magazine For Handheld Gamers. Read it, Print it, Send it to your mates...

BIG PSP REVIEW!

Ratchet & Clank: Size Matters

The platform pals cut down to size

FARM FUN!

Harvest Moon

Livestock and ladies on your DS

Test Drive

Unlimited driving brilliance

PLUS!
Old Skool Rules

The biggest retro hits of 2007

FULL REVIEWS!



DS

Diddy Kong Racing

Cute karting comeback



PSP

Virtua Tennis 3

The number one seed!



DS

Final Fantasy III

Never say never again

PLUS!
The latest mobile
games revealed
and rated





Welcome to HGZine



If you were planning not to spend any money on handheld gaming this month I've got some bad news for you. You're going to be digging into those pockets after all. Sony's platforming heroes Ratchet and Clank are back in style, taking an engrossing trip on PSP before their debut on some recently released 'next-gen' console.

Then there's Virtua Tennis 3, Test Drive Unlimited and, tucked away in the roundup section (it arrived late), Hotel Dusk: Room 215, possibly the most interesting adventure game the DS has ever seen – and that's really saying something. We're also taking a look at retro games that just keep coming back on DS, PSP and mobile, and we have news on a newcomer to the survival horror scene. A lot to get through, then, so let's get started...

Keith Stuart, Editor
HGzine@gamerzines.com

READER FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of the new issue!

DON'T MISS!
This month's highlights

Ratchet and Clank

THE BIG REVIEW Back and bonkers as ever! PAGE 13



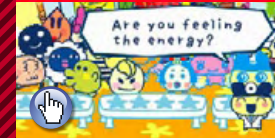
DS Final Fantasy III
It's old, but is it gold? P16



DS Diddy Kong Racing
Go ape! P19



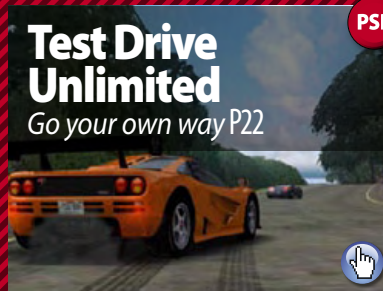
Tamagotchi
Are pets the pits? P20



PSP Virtua Tennis 3
No jokes about aces... P18



Test Drive Unlimited
Go your own way P22



MEET THE TEAM

Probably the best games writers on the planet

Ed Fear

Taking a break from Japanese RPGs, Ed tackles our all-American lead review.

Steve O'Rourke

A mixed month for Steve – the brilliant Test Drive, the turgid 300: March to Glory.

Brian Baglow

The PR guru, radio presenter and games exhibition organiser is our columnist.

Chris Schilling

The Japanophile GamesFM contributor is everywhere this month. Thanks Chris!

Mark Walbank

The amateur magician conjures some words on After Burner and Rayman.

Simon Parkin

Arrived at the last moment, delivered Final Fantasy III, left without a trace.

QUICK FINDER

Every game's just a click away!

SONY PSP

Final Fantasy Tactics:

The Lion War

Ratchet and Clank:

Size Matters

Virtua Tennis 3

Test Drive Unlimited

After Burner

PSP News Roundup

PSP Reviews Roundup

NINTENDO DS

The Ward

Rayman Raving Rabbids

Final Fantasy III

Harvest Moon DS

Diddy Kong Racing DS

Tamagotchi Connexion :

Corner Shop 2

DS News Roundup

DS Reviews Roundup

MOBILE PHONE

News

Reviews





PSP

FINAL FANTASY TACTICS

Publisher: Square Enix
Developer: Square Enix
Heritage: Final Fantasy
Tactics (PSone/GBA)
Link: www.square-enix.
co.jp/fft/ (Japanese text)
ETA: TBC



Encounters throw
you into the classic
isometric battlefield.

The Lion War refers
to two rival factions
vying for power and
dominance over the
land of Ivalice.

The grid system and
turn-based moves
allow for complex
strategies and chess-
like head-scratching.

Job classes include
Summoner, Wizard,
Priest and Chemist!

Final Fantasy Tactics: The Lion War

Build your own world...

LATEST
NEWS

What's the story?

The brilliant, if dodgily translated, Final Fantasy Tactics on PSone is finally getting spruced up and expanded for a glorious debut on PSP. Although a fresh FF: Tactics game came to GBA in 2003 this looks like returning to the original formula that made it one of the greatest strategy titles of its generation.

What do we know?

It's been nearly ten years since Final Fantasy Tactics was released on PSone so Lion War couldn't be more timely. Set in the same period as its predecessor, Ivalice, The Lion War is more than just a port, boasting new FMV, plotlines, characters and updated visuals for the beautiful widescreen display. New job classes include Onion Knight and Dark Knight while familiar friends from the Final Fantasy pantheon will come along for the ride, including Balthier from Final Fantasy XII.

The game has been shrouded in some secrecy since it was announced in December 2006 but screens and trailers clearly show a stunning new tone and feel with fresh movie sections giving it a superb hand-drawn look – something that will add greatly to the narrative pull.

Along with new bonuses and unlockables, The Lion War also contains a very welcome two-player battle feature allowing hardcore tacticians to duke it out via the PSP's ad-hoc Wi-Fi mode. Teams will be colour coded Red Vs Blue so there's no chance of mistakenly turning your own men into frogs or losing a vital high ground advantage at the wrong moment.

With enhanced graphics, better cut-scenes and multiplayer modes this could well be the deepest game to grace PSP since it launched. Start getting excited.

When do we get more?

More info will be available very soon as the game is due for release in Japan on May 10th, though it's going to be next to impossible to play unless you are well versed in the Japanese language. Maybe it's time to start those evening classes...

Anything else to declare?

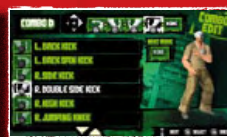
The original game on PSone packed in over 100 hours of gameplay and by all accounts the extra items, jobs and modes will stretch this version even further. The only downside to all this is that the English translation is unlikely to turn up until late 2007 at the earliest.



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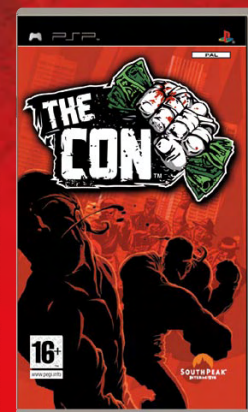


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REPLAY THIS VIDEO



DS

The Ward.

Publisher: TBC

Developer: Renegade Kid

Heritage: N/A

Link: www.renegadekid.com

ETA: Autumn 2007

Blood, shotguns and dark doorways, The Ward has all the classic ingredients for survival horror.

The heart-beep readout suggests some kind of 'fear' meter.

"The excellent lighting and smooth framerate are noteworthy"

You wake up in this bed and, strangely, want to escape as soon as possible.

Grimacing, embalmed chunks of meat. Hospital food is getting worse.

The Ward

MRSA is the least of your worries...

LATEST NEWS

What's the story?

First shown at the Game Developer's Conference The Ward has come out of nowhere to become one of the most talked about games of the year. It's being developed by a new studio, the Texas-based Renegade Kid.

What do we know?

As the title suggests the game takes place in a hospital ward, but one so spooky and disgusting it wouldn't even pass NHS standards of hygiene. After waking up in a clammy bed disoriented and unarmed, your main objective is to escape the terrors of the nightmarish hospital. As in all survival horror games you must also piece together the hero's jumbled memory and discover why strange medical experiments have been taking place.

While the plot seems a little hokey the moody screenshots and trailer suggest this could be the greatest FPS on the system to date, although in fairness it doesn't have a lot of competition. The excellent lighting and smooth framerate are particularly noteworthy and there's an atmospheric flash-light to illuminate secrets both helpful and deadly.

The FPS action is controlled via an accessible look-and-aim set-up while environment features can be manipulated and clues collected with the stylus and touchscreen. Real world weapons such as revolvers and shotguns should add to the sense of place and believability and Wi-Fi multiplayer capabilities are also promised, though details have yet to be confirmed.

Metroid Prime aside the DS is crying out for a good FPS, we sure hope this fills the gap.

When do we get more?

Renegade Kid has yet to sign with a publisher but the game is generating such interest it's likely to be snapped up before you can say super bug. Once it's signed, expect more media and trailers leading up to its release.

Anything else to declare?

We'd be less impressed by The Ward if it wasn't for the fact this new start-up have oodles of experience – team members have worked on titles such as Turok 2, Area 51 and Severance: Blade of Darkness.

INTERACTIVE CONTENT
Click here to visit The Ward



PSP

Incoming

Coming soon to your handheld

Alien Syndrome

Publisher: Sega | ETA: June

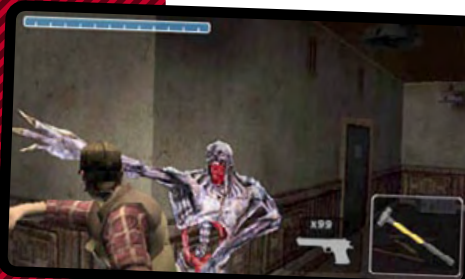
Due this summer, Alien Syndrome is an update of the run-and-gun 1987 arcade classic and throws you into spaceships, arenas and planet environments infested with extraterrestrials both large and small. Featuring beefy upgradable weapons and RPG character traits, this remake also stands out due to the four-player cooperative mode which invites gung-ho alien killers to share the burden and splash goo against walls in the name of social gaming. With Sega at the helm this could be stellar.



Silent Hill Origins

Publisher: Konami | ETA: Winter 2007

When news that a new nerve jangling Silent Hill title was coming to PSP we had to sit up and listen, before promptly hiding behind the sofa. This latest version introduces a special camera designed for PSP and a new barricade feature so you can protect yourself from encroaching enemies, at least for a short time. All the familiar elements will be here: surreal monsters, eerie music, fantastic atmosphere and shocks galore. We can't wait. Sort of.



ROUGH CUTS

More PSP games...



Crazy Taxi: Fare Wars

Publisher: Sega | ETA: June

Rejoice Dreamcast fans for one of the system's biggest franchises is making a return, albeit on Sony hardware. Comprising levels from both Crazy Taxi and Crazy Taxi 2 this looks every bit as frantic, joyful and addictive as the original arcade games. There's also an enticing multiplayer Wi-Fi ad-hoc mode which offers both cooperative and competitive games to double the pleasure. Should be squealing into shops early summer 2007.

Crush

Publisher: Sega | ETA: May

Crush is an innovative puzzler that tasks you with restoring sanity to the game's amnesiac character by solving conundrums in his mind. Sounds a bit Freudian but if the screenshots are anything to go by then the premise of crushing 3D worlds into 2D platforms to unlock secrets could be very interesting. There's nothing else out there like this so we're cautiously optimistic. Made in the UK, too!



Heatseeker

Publisher: Codemasters |

ETA: May 11

Also due for release on Wii we have high expectations for the PSP version of Codemasters' tasty looking combat flight sim. Containing an innovative on-the-fly Impact Cam, footage suggests it has all the hormonal energy of Top Gun combined with the arcade leanings of Sega's seminal After Burner. With missions in Antarctica, the Caribbean and America, plus all the latest fighter jets this is likely to be an explosive hit and one we can't wait to get our trigger fingers on.



God of War

Publisher: Sony | ETA: Winter 2007

There have been rumours of a portable outing for Sony's mythological action adventure for months now, but the team finally confirmed it at a recent GoW II launch event. The PSP version will be an original adventure, possibly slotting into Kratos' story between GoW II on PS2 and GoW III on PS3. This'll be no modest scaled down run-out either – we're promised the epic scale of the console titles. Come on, let's have some PSP/PS3 link-up action, too!

COMING
SOON

Hot PXL (April)... Marvel Trading Card Game (April)... Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Vegas (April 27)... SOCOM US Navy Seals Fireteam Bravo 2 (May 11)... Tomb Raider Anniversary (May)... Spider-Man 3 (May)... Driver 76 (June)... Pursuit Force Extreme Justice (June)... Dungeons & Dragons Tactics (July)... Manhunt 2 (Summer)... Monster Hunter 2 (September)...



DS

iNCOMING

Coming to a dualscreen near you!



Chronos Twin

Publisher: Lexicon Entertainment | ETA: May

Looking for a new spin on the 2D platformer? This strange title from Spanish developer, Enjoy Up, might fit the bill. The planet Skyla is being attacked by an alien force which can only be stopped by a lone time-travelling hero. You control the character in two different time zones at the same time, each period represented on a separate screen. No, we can't imagine it either, but we can't wait to see it!

Quickspot

Publisher: Namco Bandai | ETA: TBC

Just released this month in the States, QuickSpot is the ultimate in spot the difference games. Images go from the sublime to the ridiculous and include pictures inspired by Namco Bandai classics such as Katamari Damacy, Pac-Man and Mr. Driller. Along with the single player modes there's also a multiplayer feature called Time Bomb which asks eight players to pass the DS around as if it were radioactive. A simple, fun game likely to get a budget release later this year.



SNK vs Capcom: Card Fighters

Publisher: Atari | ETA: June

Into card collecting games and beat 'em ups? Then you'll adore this. The Card Fighters series has a cult following on the Neo Geo Pocket and is possibly one of the most overlooked brands in handheld history. This DS iteration offers a single-player story mode, over 300 cards to collect and famous characters from both SNK and Capcom history. Top Trumps with fists!



ROUGH CUTS

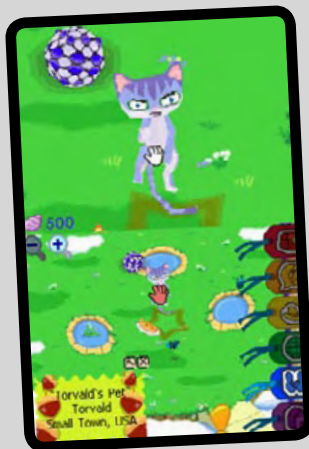
More DS games...



GoPets: Vacation Island

Publisher: Konami | ETA: Autumn

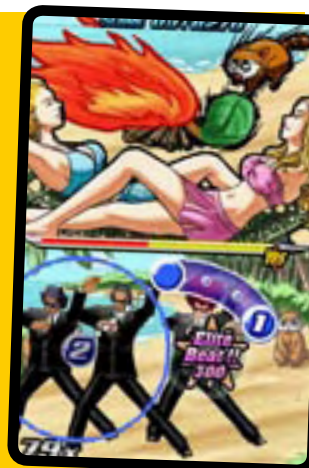
This looks like just another Nintendogs, but it's far more interesting. The idea is to create your own cat or dog then raise, train and lavish them with gifts. There will be plenty of mini-games to get stuck into but the title's stand-out feature is the ability to chat with people across the globe using an icon-based language. Teaching your dog to dance badly is the icing on the cake.



Elite Beat Agents

Publisher: Nintendo | ETA: July

Known as Osu! Tatakae! Ouendan in Japan this has been getting plaudits from import gamers the world over. At its core it's a rhythm action title that asks you to tap the screen with your stylus in time to the music, but it's so much more than that. With tunes ranging from Cher to Asian Kung-Fu Generation, Elite Beat Agents is as mad as a knitted kettle and utterly compulsive as a result.



COMING SOON

Pokémon Diamond/Pearl (April)... Final Fantasy Fables: Chocobo Tales (May)... Tank Beat (May)... Spider-Man 3 (May)... Surf's Up (May)... Meteos: Disney Magic (June 1)... Touchmaster (June)... Sim City (Summer)... Transformers (Summer)... Dynasty Warriors: Fighters Battle DS (Autumn)... Godzilla: Unleashed (Autumn)... MySims (Autumn)

MOBILE NEWS



Worms 2007

Publisher: THQ Wireless | ETA: Spring

Prepare your holy hand grenades, the hard fighting invertebrates are returning to mobile in a totally new version of the legendary turn-based strategy romp. This time, thank goodness, there's a multiplayer mode with up to four players able to fire ridiculous weapons at each others' worm armies. The visuals have been tweaked too, with luscious time-travelling backgrounds, and there's a whole bunch of new weapons to join the old classics. Perfect mobile fodder.

The Fast and The Furious: Fugitive

Publisher: I-Play | ETA: Spring/Summer

The award-winning mobile driving series is hitting the road again, featuring a cinematic storyline taking place between the two movies. You're an ex-cop street racing from LA to Miami in order to clear your name of a crime, pinned on you by a dastardly gangland syndicate. Not sure how jumping in a hot motor and pounding across America will prove your innocence but who cares? Expect Outrun-style freeway madness in both 2D and new improved 3D flavours.



Fight Night Round 3

Publisher: Electronic Arts | ETA: April

EA is bringing its pulverising next-gen boxing sim to the smallscreen and promises an admirably faithful conversion. Players take on ten legendary fighters calling on a wide selection of moves including jabs, hooks, haymakers, counters and knock downs – all accessible from the direction pad, as in the console versions. The mini-translation even retains the training and customisation elements from the original, hopefully making for something more than a quick bout of button-bashing.



Metal Slug 3

Publisher: I-Play | ETA: May

Retro arcade fans not already faint with pleasure at the thought of R-Type should find a comfy chair and sit down as fellow old-skool scrolling shoot-'em-up, Metal Slug, is taking on another mobile mission. In I-Play's conversion of this third cult favourite, you're Sergeant Allen saving the earth from a major zombie invasion. Various weapons and combat vehicles see you through the ceaseless 2D violence and there are loads of funny bits too. Just keep 'em coming.

R-Type

Publisher: Elite | ETA: May

What looks to be a faithful adaptation of Irem's famed arcade shooter could be on your mobile within weeks! UK company Elite Systems has snapped up the rights to the hardcore sideways scroller, in which your spacecraft battles through waves of aliens and weird biomechanical landscapes. With amazing level design and cool power-ups it remains one of the most fiendish blasters ever made. Prepare your thumb for numbness.



Line Rider

Publisher: InXile | ETA: September

The cult browser game, enjoyed by millions of computer owners since it's launch last year is swooping onto your telephone soon. It's more of a toy than a game, the idea being to draw a line for a teeny boy on a sledge to whiz down. The fun is in the accurate physics modelling and the challenge of constructing ever more elaborate slopes. Sounds dull, but believe us, it's so addictive you'll be in The Priory before you know it.



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SPECIAL REPORT

Old Skool Invasion

DS and PSP prove that 'old' is the new 'new'...

Forget Virtual Console. Xbox Live Arcade? Pah. If you're really after a retro fix, you're far better off powering up your handheld.

For starters, there's Impossible Mission set for a DS and PSP update this Spring. Twenty-five years on from its original Commodore 64 release, System 3's platformer is taking its portable bow, a few years after a

planned Gameboy Advance release was shelved. Featuring brand new graphics and sound, this new iteration features the original game, along with a brand new version, and a third mode which combines the first game's design with the enhanced audio-visuals of the remake. Pretty comprehensive then.

For those unaware of the setting, the brilliantly-named Professor Elvin Atombender has been tampering with national security computers, and it's up to you – playing a secret agent infiltrating his base – to try and find the missing pieces of a password to locate the professor and foil his plan. The different areas contain myriad robot enemies to avoid, and are randomly generated for each new game, which adds replay value. It certainly looks to have the right mix of the new and the old, and the PSP version generously allows players to send the full game to their friends to try out, via Wi-Fi. If it manages to retain the tense, thrilling action of the C64 classic, then this is definitely one to add to your list.

Strategic releases

Looking for something more relaxing? The DS is the console to reach for here,

"If it manages to retain the tense, thrilling action of the C64 classic, this is definitely one for your list"

with a number of titles that recall the halcyon days of 16bit gaming. EA's remake of Theme Park – which had a somewhat sudden release in mid-March – is surprisingly successful, with the stylus proving an effective replacement for the PC mouse control. It's quite sobering for those who recall the original that the entire experience can now be squeezed onto a thumbnail-sized cartridge. Budding tycoons should also start getting excited about the upcoming release of Sim City DS – this is a surprisingly full-bodied conversion, complete with recognisable international landmarks and a chat system allowing you to talk to other players throughout the world. ➤

Capcom's Mega Man series has been around since 1987. Discover it on PSP and DS today!

SNK vs Capcom Card Fighters DS revisits cult classic Card Fighters Clash. Look, it's Dhalsim!

Capcom Puzzle World includes the brilliant Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo.

Let's hope the Impossible Mission re-make retains the old speech samples. "Stay a while, stay FOREVER!"

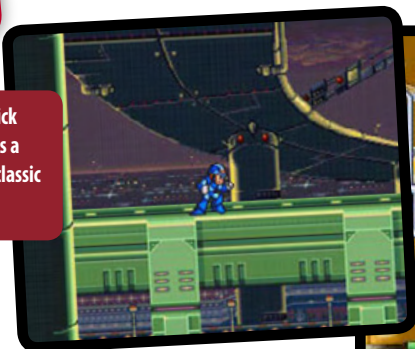
RETRO SLIDESHOW

Can't wait to get some vintage kicks? Here are eight cobweb-covered gems available right now. These should sort you out.





Mega Man Maverick Hunter X on PSP is a re-make of 1993 classic Mega Man X.



> Retro continued

Ubisoft's DS version of underrated Amiga favourite, The Settlers – with original developers Blue Byte again at the helm, some fourteen years on – is due in May. This is a charming town-building sim where players set up a colony then use nearby resources to produce goods and start trading. Should be a perfect fit for handheld.

Elsewhere, Capcom is always happy to raid its long back catalogue. The company's Mega Man series is still producing cult titles like Mega Man

Konami Classics Series: Arcade Hits features Track & Field. Button-bashing bliss.



"Capcom Puzzle World includes the criminally under-appreciated Super Buster Bros."

notably characters from the Phoenix Wright games. Definitely one to look forward to, though early impressions of the Japanese version suggest it doesn't quite live up to its heritage.

But that's not all. Konami Classics Series: Arcade Hits, just released in the US, features 15 games, including much-loved names like legendary scrapper Yie Ar Kung Fu, rock-hard shooter Contra, and button-mashing favourite Track and Field. And, as well as the aforementioned Impossible Mission, System 3 has an enhanced version of isometric fighting adventure The Last Ninja on the way later in the year.

Why so many? Retro games are quick and cheap to produce and have bags of casual appeal. They are perfect handheld fodder. They're here to stay. ●

Powered Up and Mega Man Maverick Hunter X. Capcom Puzzle World on PSP features five brainteasers, including hugely enjoyable Columns variant Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo and the criminally under-appreciated Super Buster Bros. Perhaps most excitingly, SNK vs Capcom Card Fighters DS revisits an absolute stone-cold classic – Card Fighters Clash on the short-lived Neo Geo Pocket Colour. This trading card title pitted popular characters from both developers in stat-based battles, and was life-destroyingly addictive. The remake – out in May – introduces a host of new heroes, most

Settlers is considered to be the first true resource management title, and the first to generate thousands of units in real-time. It's cute, too.



REMOTE RETRO

Got a PS3 and a PSP? You're in retro heaven!

As you may know, Japanese and American PS3 owners can now access the PlayStation Store via PS3, download classic PSone games then transfer them to PSP. The service should be available in the UK soon. Current offerings in the States include Crash Bandicoot, Tekken 2, Syphon Filter and WipEout – these are all shoe-ins for the UK version probably for around a fiver a game. There are rumours PSP owners will be able to download these games directly to their portable machines in the future.



WipEout is just one of the legendary PSone games likely to be available on the UK version of PlayStation Store in the next few weeks.

Theme Park has now appeared on eleven formats, including the ill-fated 3DO.



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PSP



Publisher: Sony Computer Entertainment
Developer: High Impact Games
Heritage: N/A
Link: www.us.playstation.com; www.highimpactgames.com
ETA: April 27

"Never-ending hordes of enemies"

The only weapons that feel useful are those that lock-on automatically.

The boss fights are suitably grand and horribly brutal.

The game features several stand-out moments, like this impressive wall-walking excursion.

Getting stuck in with Ratchet's melee attack is sometimes the best strategy.

Ratchet & Clank: Size Matters

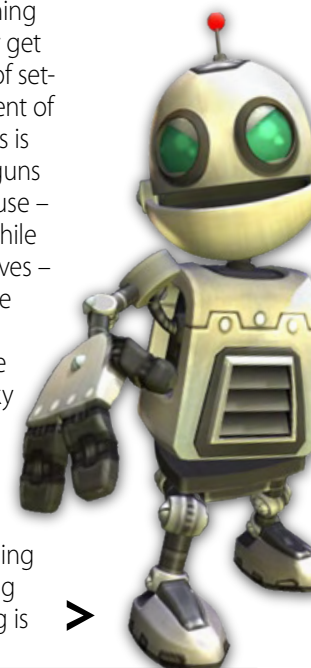
They're back with another tortuous 'weapon' pun.

In the natural world, some of the most dangerous predators don't look scary at all. They pretend to be harmless so as to catch unsuspecting prey. Size Matters most definitely fits in this category. While a glance at the big eyed anthropomorphic lead character and basic, primary-coloured landscapes might suggest a cutesy platform game aimed at undiscerning kids, the well-written, occasionally humorous cut-scenes that bookend the large levels conspire to hide a demon of a game.

It's a demon that delights in throwing a never-ending hordes of enemies at you. These enemies aren't cannon fodder either: we're talking

strong, resilient death machines that'll require your wits, not just to be about you, but to be nailgunned to your forehead. Thankfully, while defeat comes very frequently, the experience points that Ratchet earns as he battles persist even after death, eventually helping you overcome the roadblock.

Still, aimlessly hacking and slashing through the enemy ranks will only get you so far. Many of the hundreds of set-piece encounters require an element of forethought and planning, and this is where the game's vast arsenal of guns come into play. Each differs in its use – some have a wide area of effect while others can launch sentry, er, beehives – and many of the skirmishes feel like they're designed for a particular weapon. This hardware is inventive and amusing even if, at times, tricky controls mean that a good proportion of the weapons fail to deliver on their promises. Those without auto-aim are rendered almost useless, due to manual aiming only being available when standing still, and even when auto-targeting is





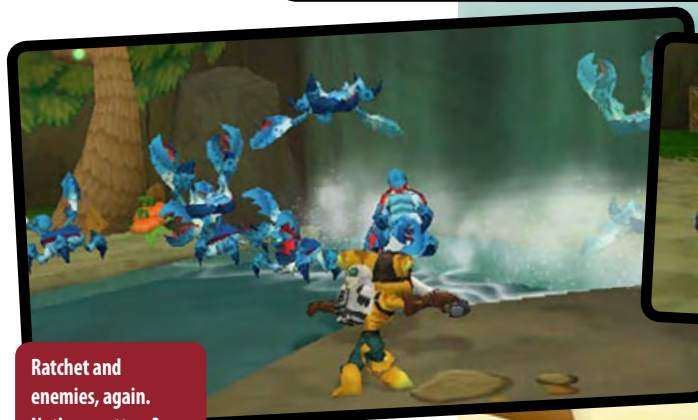
> Ratchet & Clank continued

offered it flits between targets like a wasp with ADD because there's no way of locking onto a particular enemy. At many points the game also invites – and sometimes demands – that you use the strafe buttons provided, but their unhelpful mapping to the direction pad makes it less intuitive than it should be.

Keen to avoid the never-ending gunplay from becoming stale, the game is rammed with extra sections: from a Lemmings-style puzzle game to hoverboard racing and arcade-style space combat, they're a diverse bunch even if, by spreading itself so thinly, Size Matters provokes a vague feeling of disjointedness at times.

Clank your friends

If you're gunning for some tough shooting action, or are a fan of previous iterations, Size Matters will prove an enjoyable exercise in trigger-finger cramping. Not only do you get the single-player campaign, there's also the compelling wireless infrastructure multiplayer mode, which significantly lengthens the lifespan of the game with a decent range of familiar and not-so-familiar deathmatch and team-



Ratchet and enemies, again. Notice a pattern?



You don't just get to see endless metal corridors: Ratchet's journey crosses multiple planets too.

based options. The visuals, too, are impressive, especially the detailed character modelling, and those frequent plot-driving cutscenes.

On the other hand, if you're concerned that you'll become bored or frustrated by seemingly infinite waves of hardass enemies flying at you with everything they've got, then you may need to look elsewhere for your fix of cute-looking platform action. ●

Ed Fear

SURPRISE ATTACKS

Special weapons and tactics, Ratchet-style



1. Shooting up

2. Suicidal Woebots

3. Armour Chameleon

1. Shooting Up

Crank occasionally super-sizes himself for interstellar travel, resulting in a space-based shoot-'em-up challenge. Bursting with vivid colour it may be, but there's very little here that hasn't been seen before. Still, it ranks as one of the more impressive side attractions on offer.



"Size Matters will prove an enjoyable exercise in trigger-finger cramping"

HGZine Verdict

Despite faults, Size Matters is a worthy experience for shooter fans.

PSP



Gorgeous looking



Full of content



Too hard for its own good

8

DS

Rayman Raving Rabbids

Nothing much to rave about

Rayman has always been the poor man's Mario. With his disembodied head, hands and feet and that dumb fixed expression on his face he exudes all the cultural cool of Dusty Bin. And to take the laboured comparison further, Rayman's very basic skill-set has always been one dimensional despite his adventures in 2D and 3D worlds.

For all the quirky French humour – think psychotic rabbits and distorted cover versions of songs like 'La Bamba' and 'Girls Just Wanna Have Fun' – Raving Rabbids is a yet another stodgy platforming affair. The idea is to rid the universe of the Rabbids by entering gladiatorial arenas,

collecting special costumes and defeating your arch enemy, the Rabble Droid. Unfortunately, there's far too much tooing and froing, the puzzles require a lot of tedious breadcrumb following and the basic platforming mechanics: jump, hover, punch and climb haven't encouraged imaginative level design.

Take a break

Raving Rabbids is actually two games in one. The plodding platforming takes up half your time, then there are better touchscreen levels and mini-games. In many, Rayman moves independently and you must clear hazards by, for instance, destroying boxes with a jab of the stylus or break chains with a swift stroke across the screen. You can even blow into the mic to trigger fans that propel Rayman onto higher platforms.

Other mini-games include completing picture slide puzzles, avoiding ghosts in a graveyard and lining up three images on a slot machine. These 'comfort break' missions almost make you forgive the main game, but not quite. Backtracking

is usually the death knell for any platform game and there's just too much of it here for us to ignore.

There are some good ideas in Raving Rabbids but ultimately it never inspires that one more go feeling. It is not Mario. ●

Mark Walbank

Watch out! Bunnies in UFOs! We've all had similar nightmares.

Slide picture puzzles are a nice bonus. It's a pity the same images keep coming up.

The Gallic humour and comic book styling can be fun at times.

The main gameplay is familiar platform stuff. Run, jump, run, etc.

SUITS YOU, SIR

What's Rayman wearing this season?

Though hardly a fresh idea Rayman's ability to don Elemental suits does give the game impetus at key moments. A Fire suit allows the hero to create bombs to throw at barriers while the Earth suit generates boulders which Rayman can roll over enemies or use as portable platforms. It's disappointing, however, to find you often have to use the suits to go back through earlier, drab levels to discover mission critical items. Making players repeatedly re-visit areas is the number one game design sim.

HGZine
Verdict

It may look cute, but it's tough and rather stale on the inside.

DS

- Bizarre humour
- Backtracking galore
- Too traditional

6

DS

Final Fantasy III

Square Enix's third attempt at the ultimate fantasy is remade for the 21st Century. But can they paper over twenty-year-old cracks?

We've all been there. Seduced by a seemingly pretty face, left dumb-struck by lots of precision-plastered make-up, only to discover that what's inside is broken, unlikeable or older than advertised. Final Fantasy III is, in many ways, a bit like that. To look at, this is one of the most visually-arresting games on Nintendo's handheld. But, for those unacquainted with Japan's most famous role-playing export (now into its twelfth iteration on the PlayStation 2), it's also one of the oldest and most difficult beneath the surface.

An update of a seventeen-year-old

NES game, Final Fantasy III has had its looks updated, but the character remains largely unchanged. As a Japanese RPG, this is as traditional as you could hope for. Or dread. You take control of four orphans on a quest to save the world. The backstories are minimal, motivations one-dimensional and the plot twists mostly playschool – those in search of Tolstoy-esque machinations will be disappointed.

Vintage appeal

But that's not to say the game doesn't boast a certain retrospective charm.

The flow is elegantly straightforward: you move from area to area exploring the game's world, picking up the next plot thread and following it until it inevitably leads to another dungeon and another boss encounter.

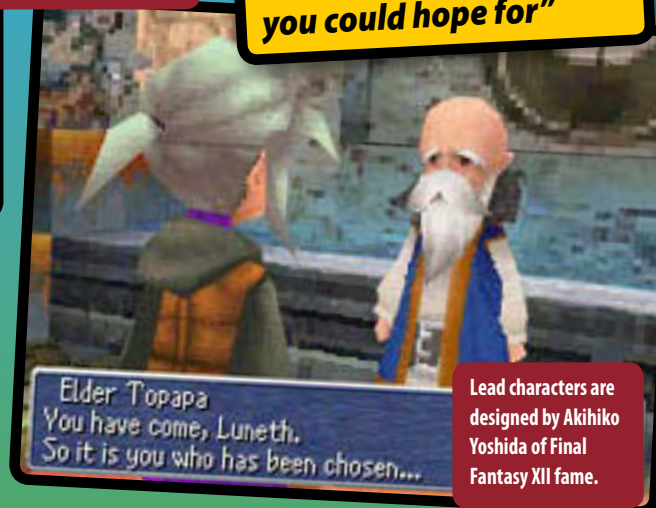
Battles are simple affairs. You take turns with the computer to input fight commands to your team-members: a strike with your character's equipped weapons, a magic spell or a

The main characters now have names and proper backstories.



Visuals retain the charm of the old version, but they're updated completely.

"As a Japanese RPG, this is as traditional as you could hope for"



Lead characters are designed by Akihiko Yoshida of Final Fantasy XII fame.

Veering from the beaten path risks meeting some very tough enemies.

The game makes full use of the touchscreen in combat and exploration.



cure item, etc. If you accidentally find yourself in a battle you're clearly going to lose you can run away but, most of the time, the first side to wipe the other one out wins.

The translation is a little dry and the lack of save points within dungeons is sometimes a problem. Loading times veer towards irritating but, for many, it's the antiquated gameplay that will turn initial lust into later disgust. Yet this remains a good-looking traditional role-playing game that will be enjoyed by hardened Final Fantasy fans and eye-candy addicts alike. Just don't expect to be long fooled by the modern make-over. ●

Simon Parkin

HGZine Verdict *Pretty and generously-sized adventure with fantastic visuals.*

DS

- Excellent graphics
- FMV sequences on a DS!
- High difficulty level

7

DS

Harvest Moon DS

Indulge in the pleasures of the farm with this touching two-screen tale.

Let's face it, the Harvest Moon games are all pretty similar. After all, there's only so many ways you can sow seeds, brush horses and milk cattle. But upon first glance Harvest Moon DS bears such an uncanny resemblance to GBA title Friends of Mineral Town, you'd struggle to tell them apart. Graphically, it's near identical, and the music and spot

effects hardly push the DS sound chip. Even the touchscreen is initially limited to mere menu navigation. Yet after your first hour's play, just try putting your DS down. You can't. Harvest Moon has got its hooks into you once more.

Seeds and sorcery

The story is typical Moon nonsense: the Witch Princess has accidentally banished the Harvest Goddess and 101 Harvest Sprites to another dimension, and it's up to you and your strangely magical farming skills to bring them back. Starting out with just a cat, a dog, and a couple of bags of seeds, the player must decide how best to build up their farm. Completing certain tasks retrieves the sprites from their limbo, allowing them to assist in different

Hippy Gustafa is your rival if you're planning to marry Nami.



"Spend idle minutes chatting with locals and wooing womenfolk"

Petting your sheep increases their heart rating. Bless 'em.



Tilling your land becomes much easier when you've upgraded your tools with ores from the mine.



The touchscreen map is useful for navigating the village at the start.



There are a number of quirky characters – from mad scientist Daryl, to potential bride (one of a massive fourteen!) Flora.



chores – watering crops, collecting lumber, harvesting produce – as you progress. This help is extremely useful considering time is pretty tight, and it allows you to spend a few more idle minutes chatting with the locals and even wooing the various womenfolk.

Harvest Moon DS improves on the previous handheld games for sheer accessibility – early hours are much less of a grind as your backpack is now able to hold many more items, meaning less to-ing and fro-ing. And after a while you'll be able to use the touchscreen to pet and wash your animals, which gives you a greater connection to your livestock. Certainly, this Moon shines brightly enough to make it a worthy buy for DS owners.

Chris Schilling

LAND AND LADIES

Unlocking your hidden lovelife...

Anyone who's played GameCube title, A Wonderful Life, will recognise most characters and locations – Harvest Moon DS is set in idyllic Forget-Me-Not Valley, with some characters from Mineral Town also making an appearance. In fact, if you slot the GBA title into your DS, you'll find a host of unlockables, including yet more potential wives!

HGZine
Verdict

Fantastic and adorable – if extremely familiar – farming fun.

DS



As addictive as ever



More to do than before



Looks like a GBA game

8

PSP

Virtua Tennis

The best tennis sim, game, set and match.

There's always an epithetic moment in every Virtua Tennis game. It's the moment when two games down and without a point to your name you try something radical to get yourself out of an awful rut. And it works! It may be a delicate drop shot or a blistering return into the body of your opponent but just one fantastic shot is all it takes for you realise that Virtua Tennis replicates the difficulty, skill and sheer frustration of the sport better than any other title.

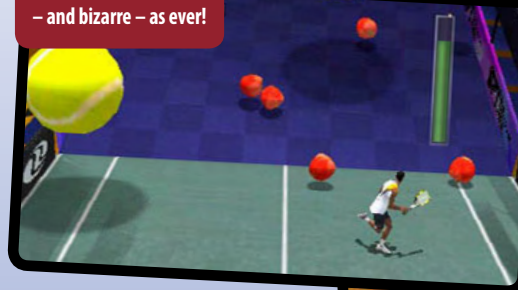
While Virtua Tennis 3 starts out easy the level of difficulty ramps up quickly and you'll soon have to draw upon on your shots: lob, slice, top-spin and powershot on both forehand and backhand to

keep winning vital ranking points. Although you can enter the Exhibition and Tournament modes from the main menu it's the classic World Tour Mode that's at the heart of the experience and it's superbly structured and compulsive.

Train to gain

You begin with a world rank of 300 but some training, friendly matches and events will soon send you up toward superstar status. Cleverly, you can improve core skills by playing a great selection of excellent

The skill-improving mini-games are as fun – and bizarre – as ever!



Doubles tournaments are hugely enjoyable and extremely tactical. The AI is exceptional, especially at the harder difficulty settings.

"It's the superbly-honed game mechanics that make this a must-own"



Short cut-scenes intersperse the action when anything great or terrible happens. That'll be Henman losing a game, again.

mini-games (there are ten more than last year's Virtua Tennis World Tour) and our favourites include hitting curling stones into score markers and preventing alligators from chomping on meat shanks. The single-player mode is incredibly comprehensive and even includes doubles matches, academy training and the ability to take holidays so you don't pick up injuries.

With a four-player ad-hoc mode (for fantastically competitive doubles matches) and all the legends of the modern game including Roger Federer, Maria Sharapova and Andy Roddick this is a superbly tricked-out package, but at its core it's the superbly honed game mechanics that make this a must-own. If you love the smell of grass courts and the whiff of Lemon Barley Water, you'll be in tennis heaven. ●

Mark Walbank

MINI-GAME MANIA

It's a load of giant balls...

Even if Virtua Tennis 3 consisted of just the World Tour mode this would be a dream title, but the expanded list of mini-games makes it absolutely essential for gaming on the go. Most of them are fun in their own right but are made more addictive because they result in gains to key skills and abilities. From hitting scrolling 'bingo' numbers to dodging giant tennis balls there's easily enough pleasure to keep you entertained while waiting for the next tournament to come round.

HGZine Verdict *The most nuanced and comprehensive tennis sim on the market.*

PSP

- Great mini-games
- Solid multiplayer
- Injuries can be a drag

9

DS

Diddy Kong Racing DS

Publisher: Nintendo

Developer: Rare

Heritage: Goldeneye, Perfect Dark, Banjo Kazooie, and the original Diddy Kong Racing of course!

Link: www.

diddykongracing.com

ETA: April 20

Will you go bananas for Rare's classic racer? Or will it drive you (wait for it) monkey nuts?

It's sad when developers feel the need to use the DS's unique features when their game would be better off without them. Take Rare's Diddy Kong Racing. Essentially, it's a remake of the N64 title, but with a host of 'improvements' which are at best pointless, at worst downright irritating.

Which is a shame, as underneath all the tacky touchscreen additions, there's a decent little racer. The game takes place on an island hub, split into themed sections – Dinosaur, Ice and other such clichés. Each of these contains numbered

doors to different races, the figure representing the amount of balloons you need to collect to unlock the event. Balloons are gained by winning races and completing challenges set by mystic elephant Taj (returning from the first game, but with a more PC-friendly accent).

Planes, karts and hovercraft

So far so good then, and the racing mechanics are certainly solid. The three vehicles used in the races (aeroplanes and hovercrafts join the standard karts) all handle differently, with the gliding hovercrafts proving particularly enjoyable. Tracks retain the excellent design quality of the originals, and the AI is thankfully of the non-cheating variety. Graphics, too, are easily a match for the N64 version, while the tunes are inoffensively catchy. Oh, and most of the familiar characters return so anyone who just wants a portable version of the classic game will be content.

Where things fall down is in Rare's decision to implement needless stylus controlled sections. Riding a magic carpet through each beaten track popping balloons is sadly utterly tedious. And whoever thought up the pre-race boost system – use the stylus to rev a wheel or whirr a propeller, then struggle to revert to the button controls – should be fed to rabid apes.

Stripped off all this monkey business, Diddy Kong Racing would be a leaner, more enjoyable experience. As things stand, despite the entertaining multiplayer, this ride has been pimped just a little too far for our liking. ●

Chris Schilling

LINE RIDER

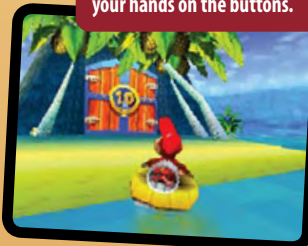
Back to the drawing board...

After beating the balloon challenges and the subsequent grand prix, another stylus-based task is unlocked. Facing off against the stage's boss once more, you draw your route with the stylus, turning a wheel in the corner of the screen to accelerate when you get stuck. Interesting idea, but it simply doesn't work.

Yes okay, the bottom screen's just a map, but it's certainly useful.

The game's obsession with balloons is frankly disturbing. What are you telling us, Rare?

The hovercraft boost is fab. Blowing into the mic keeps your hands on the buttons.



Planes are a little sluggish in their handling, but still fun to fly. Chocs away!



"This ride has been pimped just a little too far for our liking"

HGZine
Verdict

The racing's as fun as ever, but the extras are a non-starter.

DS



Looks just like the original



Standard races are challenging



Terrible story and stylus stages

6

DS

Tamagotchi Connexion: Corner Shop 2

Publisher: Atari

Developer: Namco Bandai

Heritage: Tamagotchi

Connexion: Corner Shop

Link: <http://www.tamagotchi.com/>

OUT NOW

Be a butcher, baker or sushi roll maker in this shoddy shopkeeper sequel.

If a title is going to be filled with mini-games then there has to be a) plenty of them, b) a reason to play them and c) a desire to play them over and over again. If the game doesn't meet those three basic requirements then you're served a tall glass of teeth-gnashing repetition, complemented by a generous dash of boredom and

sprinkled with the month-old dust from a game that's going to die on your shelf. Welcome to the world of Tamagotchi Connexion Corner Shop 2. You won't be staying too long.

Shop 'til you strop

The premise is simple. You've won 10,000 Gotchi points in a lottery and your partner (not in that sense) suggests investing your wad in a load of shops with the aim of becoming the Tamagotchi equivalent of High Street supremo Philip Green. Each shop represents a mini-game. There are 12 shops in total, but only four are playable from the start. So think village high street rather than Arndale Centre.

But worry not! The remaining eight mini-games don't take long to unlock because they are so disappointingly simple to play through. The Tamagotchi retail empire includes a mechanics,

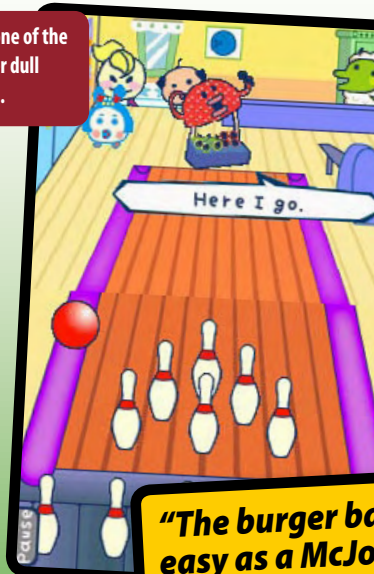
florist, bakers, burger bar and sushi restaurant to name but the ones we can bring ourselves to remember. Each shop offers a 'challenge' in a painfully similar format. At the burger bar you need to construct burgers (lettuce, cheese, burger, etc) to the Tamagotchi customer requests. It's as easy as a McJob and just about as much fun.

The other shops are equally mundane. Arrange flowers in the florist; refuel, polish and change the tyres in the mechanic's garage. Rinse and repeat for the remainder. The only saving grace? The Tamagotchi are undeniably cute and occasionally quite funny, bless their misshapen heads.

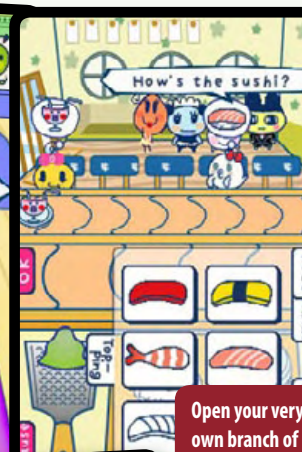
But that could just be the onset of Stockholm Syndrome after spending too long making another pink birthday cake for a squealing penguin-like creature called Kuchipatchi. ●

Steve O'Rourke

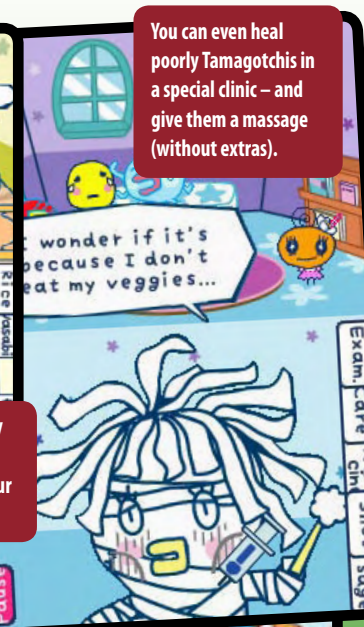
Bowling is one of the dozen rather dull mini-games.



"The burger bar is as easy as a McJob and just about as much fun"

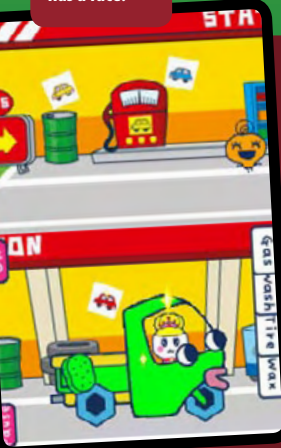


Open your very own branch of Yo Sushi! in your pocket. Great.



You can even heal poorly Tamagotchis in a special clinic – and give them a massage (without extras).

"Help, my van has a face!"



QUICKER THAN KWIK FIT?

Mini should mean more

In the Tamagotchi garage mini-game you simply fill up the tank, polish the chassis until it shines, wash away the dirt and replace the tyres with fresh wheels. That's fine as a very quick three-second challenge in, say, Wario Ware, but here it represents exactly one twelfth of the content!



No, we're not. Although the visuals *do* have a cute appeal...

HGZine
Verdict

The cute visuals deserve a bigger, better game than this

DS

- Cute characters
- Too few mini games
- Looks like a GBA game

5

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PSP



Test Drive Unlimited

Not just a racer – a way of life!

There are certain types of racing games that only appeal to PHD petrolheads. You know the sort – monotonous, eye-drooping tracks, unforgiving racing lines that infuriate more than entertain, collision detection so severe that any prang has your vehicle veering off the track quicker

than Richard Hammond in a rocket car. Fortunately, Test Drive Unlimited offers none of the ‘features’ that seem to plague technical racers and, surprise surprise, the game is all the better for it. Instead, we’re presented with a pocket-sized racing lifestyle title – and an invitation into a glamorous world where even the most miserable killjoy would have a hard time, erm, killing joy.

The good life

What’s not to like? There’s 1000 miles of rendered Hawaiian island to burn rubber through, fully streamed – with no annoying loading times. There’s an ingenious gameplay mechanic that doesn’t drag you on a conveyor belt from race to repetitive race and instead encourages freedom and exploration through offering cash incentives to upgrade cars, and homes (complete with duplex garages) to house them in. The motors themselves: all big name

brands are present and correct – Lamborghini, Aston Martin, Mercedes and the enduring Jaguar to name but a few. And all fully customisable with parts from the actual manufacturers’ catalogue. The all-important handling? Rewarding without over-simplification, boasting controls accurate enough to offer intense fulfilment when power drifting around a tight bend.

But that is far from all. Test Drive Unlimited proudly proclaims to be the first fully online PSP driving game where players can race others around the world from any Wi-Fi location. It’s a claim we can’t properly test such is the curse of receiving code before the rest of the games playing public (tough gig). But there’s no reason to think the online experience will be any less entertaining than the offline game. The driving sim for the rest of us. ●

Steve O’Rourke

You may insert a joke about leaving big skidmarks here.



As well as flash cars you get to have a GTA style gangster’s home.

You wouldn’t want to park either of these beauties in a multi-storey overnight.

SOMETHING FOR THE WEEKEND SIR?

“Yes, I think I’ll take the Lamborghini, ta”

Shopping for new motors is all part of the fun in Test Drive Unlimited. Cruising the island and pulling into top of the range showrooms to drop some dough on a new runaround is all in a day’s work. Just make sure you keep winning races to make the big bucks and feed your habit.



HGZine
Verdict

A thoroughly engrossing racer that looks as good as it drives.

PSP

- Thrilling handling
- Inspired structure
- Innovative online mode

9

PSP

After Burner: Black Falcon

High on adrenaline, low on eco friendliness...

Sega's air combat comeback is an essay in destruction. Yes, it's somewhat shallow and, yes, it's over a bit too quickly, but if you want some old-school charm with the emphasis on multiple explosions splashing orange, red and yellow across your screen then this is hard to beat.

We won't overload you with plot because what narrative there is has a cheesy comic-book flavour: 13 top secret jets have been stolen by

members of Black Falcon, a shady terrorist organisation, and it's your job to retrieve them or shoot them out the sky. This conveniently sets up 24 missions across the globe, from the icy expanses of the Arctic to the blue lagoons and desert islands of lush Micronesia which provide a wonderfully diverse range of environments for your flying pleasure.

Rocket man

And just like Sega's original 1987 classic there's never a lull in the action. Targets range from huge bombers (requiring several hits) through to surface vehicles like submarines and truck convoys. For once, the analogue nub has been tamed beautifully and rolling your jet fighter around, locking-on missiles and frantically dodging incoming rockets soon becomes instinctive and deeply pleasurable. On the harder difficulty settings – and this is where the game gets its longevity – the dogfighting is supremely tense, challenging and extremely rewarding.

Upgrades come in the form of superior cannons, the ability to launch

"Rolling your jet fighter around soon becomes deeply pleasurable"

multiple rockets and missiles and a greater payload capacity. Though emphasis has been given to earning money to buy new jets (there are 19 officially licensed planes), upgrades and amusing paintjobs, this part of the game feels awkwardly bolted on as you can easily get by with your favourite jet customised to the max.

If there's one criticism of After Burner it's that the lock-on, destroy, then fly home for tea and medals gameplay can feel a bit samey. But what it does, it does brilliantly. So if you're looking for quick reflex gaming with gratuitous carnage this has few better on PSP.

Mark Walbank

Destroy your targets and bonus parachutes drop, granting you anything from extra ammo to full health.

Scenic collisions result in instant loss of life. Don't go through there!

Check that livery! There are lots of unlockable paintjobs so you can cut a sartorial swathe through the air.

SECRET MISSION

If you should decide to accept it...

At the start of the game you can choose one of three crack pilots: Sonic (the fast guy) Bull (the mercenary) or Shinsei (the perfectionist). While the narrative missions don't alter, greater monetary rewards can be earned by completing secret tasks exclusive to your pilot. With Sonic, for instance, you'll usually be asked to finish missions in a super fast time.

HGZine
Verdict

Challenging and very satisfying, but it's all over too soon.

PSP

- Great explosions
- Nuanced controls
- Can be confusing

8

Publisher: Sega
Developer: Planet Moon
Heritage: MDK, Giants: Citizen Kabuto, Armed & Dangerous
Link: www.sega.com/games/game_temp.php?game=afterburner
OUT NOW

The 19 planes are all 'officially licensed'! We hate fake jets.

"Did that Take Your Breath Away, eh, Maverick?" And so on.

PCGZine

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- EvilAvatar.com

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The image shows the cover of PCGZine Issue 4, dated April 2007. The cover features a woman in a blue mask and green outfit, likely a character from a game. The title 'PCGZine' is prominently displayed in large blue and purple letters. Below the title, it says 'Free Magazine For PC Gamers. Read it, Print it, Send it to your mates...'. The main feature is 'EMPIRE EARTH III' with the subtitle 'Epic strategy from Stone Age to Space Age'. There is also a preview for 'THE WITCHER MAN' with an 'EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW!' tag. Other features include 'FRONTLINES: FUEL OF WAR' and 'SPARTA: Swords, skirts and strategy'. A red starburst graphic on the right side contains the text 'PCGZine' and 'Completely free of charge', 'Passionate about PC games', 'Dedicated to the biggest PC releases', and 'Written by the best in the biz'. The bottom of the cover has navigation links: 'Click Here -> Cover | Contents | Preview', 'ZOOM IN', 'ZOOM OUT', and 'TOGGLE'.

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REVIEW ROUND-UP PSP

"The enemy AI is scaled down to just about idiot level – which you need"



UEFA Champions League 06/07

Publisher: EA | Developer: EA Sports

The FIFA series has been on an upward trajectory over the last few years – this is where things level out. As you'd expect, what you get is a polished, fluid, highly accessible simulation of the ultimate domestic club championship with hundreds of teams and lots of slick passing and shooting moves. There are loads of great game modes, too, including the Treble, which challenges you to do what Fergie's lot did in '99. The key problem is over-familiarity – this is FIFA with a paint job. But, hey, at least it's not UEFA Street: Champs in da Hood. That's next year.



- 👍 Lots of modes and options
- 👍 Solid, accessible simulation
- 👍 Extremely familiar

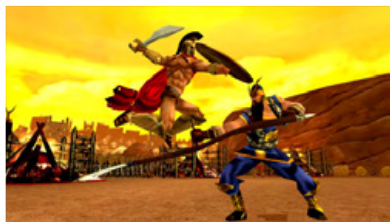
EA does it again. And again. And...

7

300: March to Glory

Publisher: Eidos | Developer: Collision Studios

There are more insurmountable problems in this lifeless movie tie-in than even the most resolute Spartan warrior could overcome. The retro hack-'n'-slash action is utterly shallow – an epic Dynasty Warrior-style strategy adventure would have been so much better. The gameplay is a conveyor belt of mundane and empty looking levels. There's no visual appeal, a terrible oversight considering how good the movie looks. But above all else, 300: March to Glory is just plain boring. Thankfully, it's also quite short, so you won't waste too much time playing it. You can waste even less by just watching the film instead.



- 👎 Dull gameplay
- 👎 Poor visuals
- 👎 Incredibly cynical

March to the returns counter

4

TMNT

Publisher: Ubisoft | Developer: Ubisoft Montreal

Of all the TMNT film tie-in games designed to drop you into the flippers of the 1980s' most beloved Ninja amphibians, the two handheld versions are the worst. Spread across fifteen missions this could probably be described as a jump-'em-up. Or a rhythm action platformer (though this makes it sound quite interesting, which it isn't). You move from area to area by making context sensitive inputs as directed by on-screen prompts. This is a bravely innovative but desperately rubbish piece of game design. The occasional fight punctuates the dreariness but it's a fighting system simpler than the ancient arcade version. Without question, the worst PSP game we've played to date.



- 👎 Poorly implemented concept
- 👎 Sparse levels
- 👎 Boringly simple combat

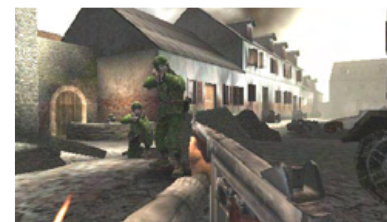
A mutant abomination

3

Call of Duty: Roads to Victory

Publisher: Activision | Developer: Ubisoft

First-person shooters don't usually work well on portable platforms but this is a decent attempt. The auto-targeting is just right without being intrusive while the enemy AI is scaled down to just about idiot level – which you need with the loss of controller accuracy. The missions are standard COD stuff with a mix of all-out street fights and sneakier hits. We like also like the flight sections where you take on a gunner role in an aircraft – it mixes up the pace. Roads... is no substitute for the PC or console versions, but it's much better than many thought possible.



- 👍 Familiar and fun missions
- 👍 Atmospheric environments
- 👎 Compromised weapon accuracy

A victory of sorts

7

Recommended PSP Releases

Recent stuff you should try

Test Drive Unlimited

(Atari)

Wonderfully structured driving game which provides a real feel for the sports car-driving high life.

Virtua Tennis 3

(Sega)
Impressively crafted handheld conversion of the excellent PS3 sports sim. A triumph.

Pirates!

(2K Games)
Take to the high seas in Sid Meier's thoroughly entertaining and open-ended pillage-'em-up.

Chili Con Carnage

(Eidos)

Ridiculously flamboyant action adventure set in a Mexico filled with stylised slow-motion gun battles and hot babes. What's not to like?

Sega Mega Drive Collection

(Sega)
Over 30 classic Sega games lovingly restored and accompanied by fascinating trivia and other extras.

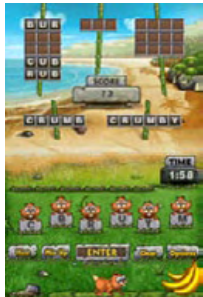
REVIEW ROUND-UP DS

Pogo Island

Publisher: EA | **Developer:** Pogo.com
(US Version reviewed)

Pogo.com is EA's own casual gaming website and this DS release features five of the most popular titles you can find on there: Word Whomp, Poppit!, Phlinx, Tri-Peaks Solitaire and Squelchies. It's essentially a torrent of bright, cheery word puzzles and coloured shape sorters with some added mini-games and multiplayer functionality. The game also allows you to upload points to your online PC account – a clever little extra, no doubt designed to tempt the massive web audience to come across to handheld console. The

selection of games seems a bit stingy, though, even if these are all gently compelling and tightly designed casual gems.



- Nice brain-teasing collection
- Clever use of Wi-Fi
- More games please!

Sweet but slight

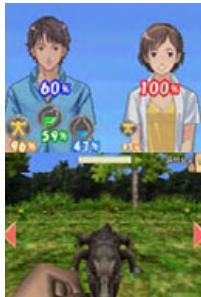
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Lost in Blue 2

Publisher: Konami | **Developer:** KCE Hawaii
(US Version reviewed)

The original Lost In Blue island shipwreck adventure, arrived in a flush of early DS titles, all fighting to make use of the offbeat features – you could blow on the mic to keep a fire lit! We loved it. The sequel has a new couple, but the action is similar: keep them alive on a harsh isle. The mini-games are a blast, with goat milking, fish spearing and animal trapping. But while you'll be dying to keep exploring and discovering new ways to torture animals, the kids are so high-maintenance many players will give up in frustration as their attempts to keep the duo fed

and happy come to nothing. It's cute, sure, but the wonky difficulty curve may finish you off way before the animals get you.



- Hilarious mini-games
- The idea remains compelling
- Frustrating at times

Just about worth finding

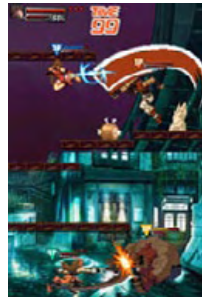
7

Guilty Gear: Dust Strikers

Publisher: Majesco | **Developer:** Arc System Works

The Guilty Gear series of showy hardcore fighting games has never attracted the attention of, say, Street Fighter, but it has a large base of diehard fans. We're not sure how they'll feel about this 2D brawler which spreads over both DS screens and owes as much to Smash Bros. as it does to its cult predecessors. Battles (particularly in multiplayer) are fast, furious and messy, with power-ups and special moves aplenty – gone is the icy precision of old. And although the numerous game modes and mini-games make

it a good value package, it's almost certain to be too simple for seasoned fans. This is stripped-down play fighting, like it or lump it.



- Huge roster of characters
- Looks good, sounds terrific
- Repetitive and a bit shallow

Punchy portable pugilism

6

Hotel Dusk: Room 215

Publisher: Nintendo | **Developer:** CING

This admirably unusual 'interactive novel' is certainly heavier on the 'novel' part. There's reams of slow-moving text to tap through as you interrogate the various inhabitants of a spooky deserted hotel, while the occasional puzzles are pretty simplistic. It's a good job then that the script is so good, with sparkling dialogue and a thrilling, twisting film noir plotline. Characters are superbly-drawn too, and not just in story terms – the fantastic pencil-sketch art style adds much to the appeal. Like a good novel, you won't want this to finish.



- Stylishly presented
- Wonderfully scripted
- Sometimes slow and linear

Five-star Hotel

9

"Sparkling dialogue and a thrilling, twisting film noir plotline"



Recommended DS Releases

Recent unmissable goodies

Mario vs Donkey Kong 2 (Nintendo)

Engrossing puzzler/platformer with all the great Mario characters and more charm than you can handle.

Hotel Dusk: Room 215 (Nintendo)

Utterly transfixing. It's fantastic to know games like this still get made.

Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin (Konami)

The classic platforming series comes to DS and doesn't disappoint with a well-structured gothic adventure.

Phoenix Wright: And Justice For All (Nintendo)

The crusading lawyer returns with more baffling cases and comic story interludes. Objection? Denied!

Lunar Knights (Konami)

Imaginative Gothic sci-fi RPG action from Kojima Productions, the makers of Metal Gear no less.

MOBILE REVIEWS

All the latest from the world of mobile phone gaming



Power Rangers Mystic Force

Publisher: Living Mobile

The multi-coloured martial arts morons are back in this passable scrolling platformer. Your aim is to free captured rangers then use their abilities to unlock and destroy Hidiac generators and foil arch enemy Koragg. If you're a die-hard fan there's hours of familiar jump and kick fun, but anyone else would be better off with one of the Splinter Cell mobile titles.

- 👍 Ten nicely drawn levels
- 👎 Accurately idiotic 'story'
- 👎 Highly derivative

Not mighty morphin' enough

6

Rafa Nadal Tennis

Publisher: THQ Wireless

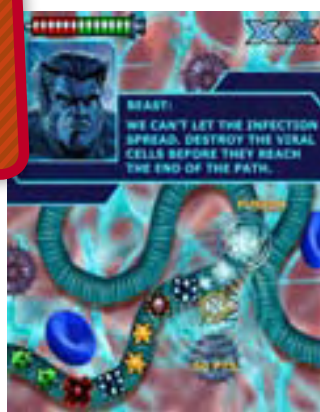
Join the world number two seed as he powers through championship, exhibition and even Bluetooth two-player modes on four surfaces. The visuals are crisp and detailed and the control system is simple enough: you handle player movement and spin, while hitting the ball is automatic. It's a little fiddly at first, but some satisfying rallies are possible. Good stuff.



- 👍 Detailed visuals
- 👍 Highly competitive
- 👎 Controls are fiddly

A neat spin on the tennis sim

7



X-Men Genetix

Publisher: Hands-On

Hoping for some arcade fighting action? Forget it. This is a basic object sorting puzzler in the style of Luxor or Zuma, with the X-Men license tacked on. A virus is attacking the bodies of our mutant heroes and you must track its progress through the veins of various characters, attempting to move similarly coloured cells together in order to create groups which then disappear, taking nearby viral particles with them. Although the basic recipe still works, the interface is unwieldy and oversensitive, while the restricted playing area is frustratingly narrow. One for Marvel-obsessive Zuma fans we feel.

- 👍 Gets the Zuma basics right
- 👎 Lacks tactical variety
- 👎 Rather cynical branding

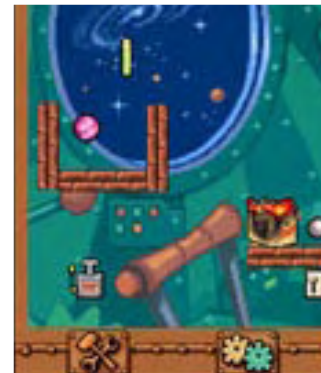
Ill-fitting genes

5

The Incredible Machine

Publisher: Vivendi

A cult favourite from the 16bit computing days, The incredible Machine has lost none of its sparkle on mobile. It's a wonderfully compelling puzzler in which you combine bits and bobs like pipes, balls, fans and lasers to solve increasingly complex puzzles, usually by setting off chain reactions to launch rockets or pop balloons. After each contraption is successfully completed you receive a score for your efforts unlocking more of the 80 challenges. This is delightfully designed, highly thoughtful stuff, perfect for keeping your brain ticking while on the move.



- 👍 Interesting concept
- 👍 80 levels and a free play mode
- 👍 Bite-sized portions

Incredible indeed

8



RECOMMENDED
Four mobile games we're playing now

Project Gotham Racing (Glu)

Breathtakingly good version of the triumphant Xbox racer.

Tornado Mania

(Digital Chocolate)

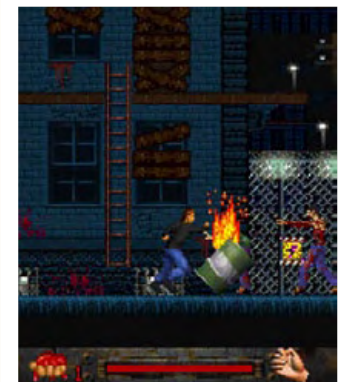
Control a tornado as it levels a city. Original and so much fun.

NOM (Living Mobile)

Probably the most innovative mobile game ever made.

The Incredible Machine (Vivendi)

This loveable science project sim is already a firm favourite.



Land of the Dead

Publisher: Ojom

George Romero's movie is a weird choice for a game tie-in, because a) it was out two years ago and b) it was incredibly disappointing. With so little to live up to, Ojom's scrolling platformer fares okay, combining some of the tricks of survival horror (ammo rationing, scary dark areas) with relentless hack-'n'-slash action. The plot? You're in a small band of survivors trying to stay alive amid an urban wasteland of drooling undead. That doesn't matter doesn't, finding meatier weapons and stoving heads in does. It's over pretty fast and you won't want to exhume it once it's finished.

- 👍 Atmospheric locations
- 👍 Some nice survival horror bits
- 👎 Quick and too easy

Dead ordinary

6



360Zine Issue 5 Out Now

★★★
360Zine

Completely free of charge
Passionate about Xbox 360
Dedicated to the biggest releases
Written by the best in the biz

★★★

"I was impressed with the quality of the writing, content and layout of this publication."
MajorNelson.com



INSIDE ISSUE 5

GRAND THEFT AUTO IV

Rock Star Games finally lifts the lid on the next gen's most anticipated game.

Read the latest info and watch the video!

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Got something to say about the magazine or handheld games in general? Email us now at hgzine@gamerzines.com

READER FEEDBACK!
Click here to send us a letter now!

TWO ISSUES IN AND SHOWING NO signs of slowing down. Good on ya. Really liking the way the mag is laid out and impressed by the embedded videos (although not all want to work on my Vista powered PC). Shame we can't get a few more pages in there and maybe it'd be a good idea to say which networks and handsets mobile games are available on?

Oh, and accessories? Please?
> James Glen

Thanks for your email, James. We're hoping to get more pages in issue four of HGZine so please keep

Don't miss Issue 4

Out May 10
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reading. As for your Vista problems, Adobe promises a Vista compatible version of Reader in the near future. With mobile games, we'd like to include the information you've asked for but it's complicated. Some games are released on up to 100 handsets, and many appear on one or two networks first before rolling out across the board. It's a little too much info to get on one page!

I THINK THE IDEA OF THROWING PSP, Nintendo DS and mobile phone games in one magazine is... er... inappropriate. I know you guys are poor and have tried hard to feed your altruism, but, c'mon, I was kinda tired skipping pages of NDS and cellphone games reviews. Other than that, it was amazing, guys.

> Oce Chairiadi

Riiiiight. You wouldn't be a PSP owner by any chance would you? 'Inappropriate' indeed...

TWO SUGGESTIONS:

1. Start a mobile products magazine for PDAs, handheld consoles, phones and other mobile gadgets.
2. Make the magazine viewable on mobile formats. Ebook readers do not function with this document, nor does my sister's IPAQ 1945. It is possible to read PDF files on a PSP, but again, this magazine won't work.

> Terry Braggs

We asked our technology expert about this and he said, "we looked at all the ways of producing the magazine for the PSP as well as



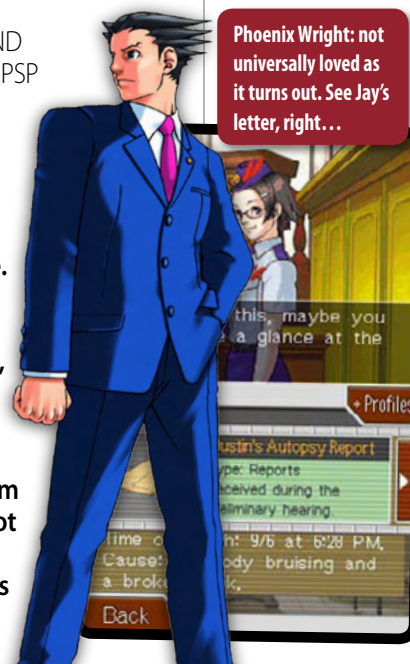
A PSP version of HGZine? Sadly folks, it's just not going to work anytime soon.

desktop PCs, but the only solution is to render it as a set of JPEGs, which are either too small to read, or if you zoom in tend to lose resolution and remain illegible. You also have to lose all the video and interactive content, which is a big draw of the GamerZines, so it just wasn't worth it. The same is true of the mobile/ebook readers, until they fully support the PDF1.5 format and video playback."

GREAT MAGAZINE, AND excellent coverage of PSP games, but you could preview more PC games.

> Stephen Shay

Erm, I'll be gentle. This magazine is called HandHeld GamerZine (HGZine, for short). We cover PSP, DS and mobile phone games, but not PC. PCGZine from the same site you got this mag from gives you all the PC games you could want.



Phoenix Wright: not universally loved as it turns out. See Jay's letter, right...

GAME MATTERS

Your thoughts on the games you're playing right now...

WHAT THE HECK IS GOING ON with Final Fantasy? I can't keep up! Don't get me wrong, I'm a fan of the series, but there are so many handheld versions out this year I'm getting confused, and the old bank balance is going to take a beating.

> Thomas Spencer

There do seem to be a lot of releases, but at least Square Enix believes in treating each console differently rather than trying to shoe-horn one game onto a wide range of very different machines...

I HATE PHOENIX WRIGHT! I REALLY don't get what everyone loves about it. It's slow, the graphics are dodgy and the puzzles are really just a process of elimination. Why does everyone think it's so great?

> Jay Bent

Can someone else deal with this, please?

WHAT'S THE BEST STRATEGY GAME on PSP? Just bought one and I was a big fan of Advance Wars on my old GBA...

> Rob Filton

Sid Meier's Pirates! is a lot of fun, but probably not what you are after. Anyone else help Rob?



10 reasons to try mobile gaming

Resisted the temptation until now? Go on, give it a go...

The mobile games market is poised to unleash a whole bunch of new ideas, technologies, handsets and games in 2007. Here are the best bits...

3D Graphics

More and more handsets now have built-in 3D graphics chips. Indeed, ATI and NVIDIA, the companies behind the PS3 and Xbox 360 graphics hardware both make chips for phones. Currently, high-end models can show smooth, fast 3D graphics, and soon, ordinary £100 mobiles will be able to produce PlayStation and GBA quality visuals.

Advertising-Funded Games

You don't have to pay for mobile games – a number of companies are offering them for nothing. They slip an

advert or two into the game and it's your for free. Try www.hovr.com, or www.gamejump.com to get you started (you'll need to download the games to your PC and transfer them to your phone via USB cable or Bluetooth).

Flat-Rate Data Charges

One thing putting people off mobile games is the suspicion that the download will wipe several quid off their top-up. The networks are slowly introducing flat rate plans, where you pay a fixed amount, no matter how much you download. T-Mobile and 3 are the first in the UK to offer this.

Demos/Try Before You Buy

A number of companies are starting to offer demos, in exactly the same way the PC and console markets do. Yay! Watch your operator's WAP portal and the online mobile game stores.

Mobile Games Magazines

Buying mobile games sucks for the most part. You get a tiny screenshot, the name of the game and a price. Fair enough for 3D Pool, but what about Robo Chicken Gem Blast? What is it? That's where the media comes in. Many magazines and sites now offer mobile games reviews. Look! You're reading one. Use them.

Connected Gaming

Mobile phones are always connected to the net and can do so much more than just multiplayer. Persistent online games, connections with PC or console games and direct communication with other players... expect to see all of these in games very soon. Keep an eye out for space-based MMO, O Game by LBX Games or pray for a UK version of massive Korean title, Path of a Warrior.

"£100 phones will soon produce PS2 and GBA quality graphics"

Native OS Games

If you buy a slightly pricier phone, you can expect a whole lot more. Mobiles using Symbian or Windows Mobile operating systems, can already play far more complex games than Java handsets. There are HUNDREDS of games out there already and more publishers are joining in. Just Google "symbian games"!

Touch Screens

Apple DIDN'T start it, thank you. Mobiles have had touch screens for ages. Now, more and more phones (like the Sony Ericsson W950i above) are offering this and opening up the market to DS-style gaming.

Camera Phones

Almost every phone has a camera now and there's a new generation of games appearing which use it as part of the gameplay. Even the early games are fantastic. Look out for Attack Of The Killer Virus from Ojom.

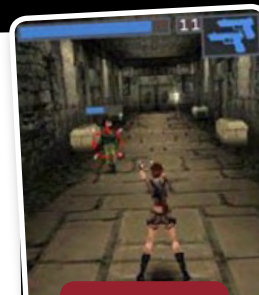
Fun ideas

Mobile games cost less to develop than big console titles so developers can experiment with offbeat ideas. How about Come On Baby a cute parenting sim or SCX which simulates all the fun of slot-car racing? Neither will be on Xbox 360 anytime soon... ●

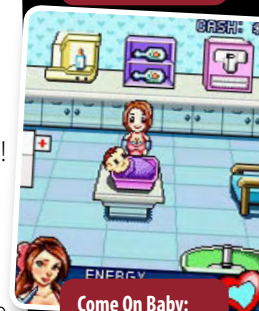
Brian Baglow



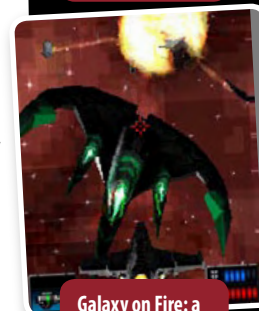
Brian Baglow is a veteran mobile games insider, PR guru and, lately, videogame events organiser. He's been involved in mobile gaming since 1999, when games were black and white and all this was fields.



Lara gets 3D in TR: Legend.



Come On Baby: parenting fun.



Galaxy on Fire: a fabulous 3D title.



Project Gotham is great on mobile.

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